



MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

Bus Priority Pilot

The Town of Arlington, the City of Cambridge, and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) are collaborating on a bus priority pilot funded by a grant from the Barr Foundation. The pilot will include features of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on Massachusetts Avenue, serving the MBTA Routes 77, 79, and 350.

What is the Mass Ave bus priority pilot?

The pilot will test certain features of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on MBTA bus routes along Massachusetts Avenue. The pilot aims **to create a faster and more reliable commute for nearly 5,000 bus riders** while improving traffic conditions overall. The pilot will operate on the eastbound side of Mass Ave from Pleasant Street to Alewife Brook Parkway (Rte. 16), Monday through Friday during the morning rush hour commute for one month beginning in the fall of 2018.

What BRT features may the pilot include?



RE-TIMED TRAFFIC SIGNALS AND TRANSIT SIGNAL PRIORITY to be implemented where feasible so that **buses get more green light time** when needed but also to improve traffic flow overall.

A DEDICATED LANE to take bus riders out of car traffic along Mass Ave. Communities throughout the U.S., including in Massachusetts, that have tested dedicated lanes have found that they result in **more reliable trips** for people riding the bus—as well as overall improved traffic flow for people in cars and on bikes—because buses no longer pull in and out of traffic.

INBOUND QUEUE-JUMP LANES to give **buses priority** at intersections on Mass Ave.



Why perform a pilot?

17% of Arlington residents commute by bus.

This pilot provides an opportunity to put bus priority measures in place, observe the results, make further changes as needed based on those results, and learn from the experience to inform continued long-term planning.

What happens during the pilot?

The bus pilot will begin with the implementation of BRT elements in the **fall of 2018**, accompanied by focused publicity and educational community outreach. Arlington, Cambridge, and the MBTA anticipate leaving the facilities in place while working with community members and local businesses to evaluate the pilot. Evaluation will continue for a month after the pilot has ended, culminating in a final community forum to discuss the outcomes of the pilot program.

How will travelers be affected?

The incorporation of BRT features on Mass Ave will cut minutes off the travel time for MBTA bus riders, particularly during the weekday morning rush hour. Even more importantly, it will **make those travel times more predictable**. The reduced commute time will encourage more people to use buses, **decreasing overall traffic**. By encouraging more efficient and reliable bus transport, bus commuters will experience faster commutes, and commuters who currently utilize other modes will have greater incentive to take the bus.

How will this benefit Arlington?

Imagine saving two weeks on your commute every year. In 2017 the implementation of a bus-only lane on upper Broadway in Everett contributed to a 20% reduction in travel times. The potential of bus prioritization to decrease congestion, commute times, and greenhouse gases is profound.

Improving our bus system also helps us effectively plan for transportation in Arlington's future. A recent study shows that the Greater Boston region can expect growth of 430,000 new residents between the years 2010-2030. In Arlington, the population is projected to continue to increase by 5% from 2010 levels to nearly 45,000 residents by 2030.

Without thoughtful planning, our transportation system won't keep pace with our needs—creating more traffic and making it harder for everyone to get to where they need to go. Previous local demonstrations have shown that incorporating BRT elements into the MBTA system gives riders a more positive impression of their bus experience and has **the potential to increase bus ridership**—which is critical to decreasing car traffic, cutting greenhouse gases, and promoting complete streets.

What is the community process and timeline?

The Town of Arlington and the MBTA are committed to engaging with local community members and abutting businesses leading up to the pilot, as well as collecting data over the course of the pilot to evaluate its effectiveness. In addition to the internal meetings for municipal staff, the Town will host three community meetings, with exact dates to be announced, and seek feedback through community outreach and our digital channels.

- **MAY 16, 2018, 7-9 PM** – Town Hall
- **JUNE 2018, 7-9 PM** – Town Hall
- **FALL 2018** – Pilot Kick off
- **LATE FALL 2018** – Post pilot community forum

How can I learn more?

For questions or feedback please email
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